Mobilizing Neighborhoods

A Guidebook For Residents And Businesses

Introduction

An organized and mobilized community is one of the most effective means available for keeping crime out of our neighborhoods. When neighbors work together with law enforcement, it creates the best crime fighting team around. Be a good neighbor and make your community safer by getting involved.

The primary focus of this handbook is to provide community members with tools that will help:

- Organize and mobilize neighborhoods;
- Build strong, trusting, community partnerships;
- Improve communications with law enforcement, local government and other community partners;
- Revitalize neighborhoods through innovative problem-solving efforts.

The Danville Police Department is committed to working with residents, business owners, community groups, schools, religious groups, private organizations, and other government agencies to fight crime and improve the quality of life for the people of Danville. We hope the information contained in this booklet will help accomplish this goal.

Acknowledgement

A portion of the information in this publication was taken from the California Attorney General's Crime and Violence Prevention document — *COPPS: Building Safer Communities.* The Danville Police Department thanks the Attorney General's Office for this contribution.

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Definitions

Community Oriented Policing

Community oriented policing is a philosophy, management style, and organizational strategy that promotes pro-active problem solving and police-community partnerships to address the causes of crime, the fear of crime and other community issues. Community policing redefines the roles and relationships between the police and the community to require shared ownership, shared decision-making, and shared accountability.

Community Partnerships

Community partnerships are any combination of neighborhood residents, schools, faith-based organizations, businesses, community-based organizations, elected officials and government agencies working together with the police to resolve identified problems. Community policing requires residents and business owners to get involved by taking ownership of their neighborhoods, by attending neighborhood crime prevention meetings, and to be proactive in practicing crime prevention measures.

Problem Solving

Problem solving is a process that identifies problems and priorities; collects and thoroughly analyzes information; develops responses; evaluates the effectiveness of each response; and modifies as necessary. Problems can be understood and described in a variety of ways. No one way is definitive. They should be described in whichever way is most likely to lead to an improved understanding of the problem and effective interventions.

Building Community Partnerships

The statement, "the whole is greater than the sum of its parts" reflects the value of building community partnerships. Forming partnerships brings a team together with expertise in many disciplines, such as law enforcement, education, the faith community, businesses and social services. It is important to remember not to wait for a crisis to occur to form a partnership. The following information will help you build successful partnerships in your neighborhood and community.

Roles and Responsibilities

The following are examples of activities you, as a community partner, can undertake to help further the community policing movement and improve the quality of life in your own neighborhood.

- Be aware of potential warning signs that a neighborhood problem is escalating.
- Establish goals and objectives to make change occur.
- Document community problems and community nuisance activities.
- Notify appropriate city or county officials of problems and report suspicious or criminal activities to law enforcement.
- Work with law enforcement and your community partners on formulating possible solutions to community problems.
- Be willing to delegate responsibility when possible; remember there is power in partnering.
- Be accountable when taking action.
- Make it your responsibility to use all possible resources available to solve a problem and take action.
- Be sure to routinely communicate with your community partners, including government officials and law enforcement.

Sustaining Partnerships

When community partners come together due to a rash of crime incidents, they may solve the problem and get through the event, but then fail to continue to collaborate. Sustaining long-term partnerships is essential for a safe and healthy community. Continue to communicate with other neighbors and partners in the community.

Your Neighborhood

This section contains useful tools for forming and organizing partnerships, documenting neighborhood and community problems, improving communication and solving problems. The purpose of this section is to give you and your community partner's practical tools to put community oriented policing and problem solving into action in your community.

Starting a Neighborhood Watch

Neighborhood Watch is neither a vigilante organization nor a substitute for the police. Rather, an active Neighborhood Watch Program acts as the collective "eyes and ears" of your community, which benefits your neighbors and law enforcement. By being alert, caring and responsive, you not only protect the safety and welfare of yourself and others, but also can reduce and prevent the growth of blight and crime where you live.

How You Can Form a Neighborhood Group

1. Canvass your neighborhood for interest in starting such a program.

2. Contact the Danville Police Department - Crime Prevention Unit and explain that you are interested in organizing a Neighborhood Watch group. Ask for crime statistics for your neighborhood and crime prevention information for your first meeting.

3. Choose a meeting site, date and time, which is convenient for most neighbors.

4. Develop and distribute a flyer announcing the meeting.

5. Send out a reminder about the meeting a few days before.

Holding the First Meeting

1. Welcome everyone and make opening remarks

2. Ask the Police Department representative to discuss the issues that are important to you and your neighborhood. You may also have your first meeting without a police department representative if you wish.

3. Ask the group if anyone wants to be a neighborhood block leader to assist in the organization and mobilization of the neighborhood.

4. Decide how often your group wants to meet. Neighborhood Watch groups can be as formal or informal as you wish to make them.

Organize a Neighborhood Communication System

Communication is the key in neighborhood mobilization. There are many ways to accomplish a communication system, and each neighborhood group will be different in the method they choose. Some examples are: a telephone tree; a group email; or a neighborhood website. No matter what system you choose, it is important for everyone, especially the group leader and co-leaders, to know their roles and know what to do in notifying other residents on issues of importance.

Obtaining Crime Information about Your Neighborhood

The Danville Police Department offers a crime mapping tool to its residential and business community. To access, go to the Danville Police Home Page at: www.danville.ca.gov/police and click on the "CrimeReports" Icon. A selected number of crimes are available to choose from, along with time frames dating back to six months. The program also offers:

- Type of crime, date and time of report
- Address of the incident, to the nearest hundred block
- Free email alerts sent to you, when a crime occurs near the location you select
- Printable reports and maps
- Daily updates on the crime map

The Police Department urges residents and business owners to use this crime mapping program to educate themselves on crime in their neighborhood. The more you know, the more you can help prevent crime from occurring.

CrimeReports

www.danville.ca.gov/police

Reporting Neighborhood Problems

How to Report a Non-Emergency
For a non-emergency situation, which is any situation not requiring immediate police attention, call the non-emergency telephone number of (925) 820-2144 and provide the dispatcher with information on: 1) location of the incident, 2) detailed description of activity, and 3) people and vehicles involved.

How to Report an Emergency
For a situation that requires immediate police attention, call 9-1-1, and be prepared to provide the following information:

- What is the emergency and where is the emergency?
- The building number and street address?
- Major cross streets?
- The nature and type of injuries?
- Who is involved?
- Give your name and location.
- Give the name and description of people involved.
- Your relationship to the emergency.
- When did it occur?

For a crime in progress, you may be asked to stay on the phone and give updates regarding:

- Number and description of people.
- Number and types of weapons.
- License plate, color, make and model of vehicles.
- Direction vehicle or suspect was last seen traveling.
- Any changes or developments in the activity.

Dispatchers are relaying information to field officers while you are on the line, so remain patient when being asked questions by the dispatcher. You may also be put on hold for a short time, depending on call volume in the dispatch center.

Documenting and Recording Neighborhood Problems
Documenting neighborhood problems is critical to finding solutions to resolve them. By logging information about problems or suspicious activities, you can keep law enforcement and neighbors informed. This information can be used by law enforcement to investigate activities or to track activity patterns. It can also be presented to a civil court judge when using that avenue to resolve a problem. (See Activity Log Sample in this Workbook). Gathering the above information must never be done by putting yourself in harm's way. Personal safety always comes first.

Effective Communication

Effective communication can help gather community partners, inform neighbors about problems, and can often help reduce the impact that crime and violence have on a community. The following are practical tips on communications of all types:

Neighborhood Letters

- **Be accurate.** Confirm your facts of the issue, people's names, and dates and times of incidents, meetings held, etc.
- **Be neat.** A professional looking letter enhances communication.
- **Be concise.** Identify the purpose of your letter, the circumstances related to that purpose, your expectations, a time frame for reply and your appreciation. If you can say it in fewer words, do so. Have someone else proofread your letter.
- **Be considerate.** Whether you are writing a known ally or a well-established adversary, be respectful of this person's time, responsibilities and limitations. A letter laced with emotion, personal judgment and unfounded accusations can cause more harm than good.
- **Be available.** To encourage discussion, specify whom to contact for further information and provide that person's telephone number and mailing address.
- **Follow up.** If you request a response within a certain period of time, and have not received one, either write or call to inquire. After you receive an answer, if appropriate, respond with a written confirmation or thank you. Take this opportunity to clarify status.
- **Distribute appropriate copies.** Circulate copies to interested and appropriate parties. Always send the original to the addressee, and keep a copy in your files. If you need to verify receipt, send as certified or registered mail.

See samples of letters to both a "Problem Resident" on page 8, and a "Letter to the Police about a Neighborhood Problem" on page 9.

Verbal Communication

- Always speak cordially and politely.
- When dealing with an adversary, remain professional and respectful. Losing your patience and becoming hostile will only make matters worse.
- Be accurate. Don't embellish the facts and circumstances.
- Open and honest communication helps build trust.

Using Community Problem Solving

The following information can assist you and your neighbors in applying the problem-solving process.

The Problem-solving Model: SARA (Scanning • Analysis • Response • Assessment)

The problem-solving process developed through Community Oriented Policing and Problem Solving is widely practiced by law enforcement and other government agencies and can be used by community members as well. In this process a "problem" is defined as two or more incidents which are similar in nature, that cause harm or have the potential to cause harm. Similarities among incidents include: person, location, behavior and time. The model consists of the following four-step process:

Scanning
Determine problems through:

- A personal experience with location, activity or behavior that has come to the police or the community's attention.
- Communication with residents, businesses or other public or private agencies.

Analysis
Researching the problem to:

- Learn everything possible about those affected by the problem (stakeholders), and the incidents and actions already taken to deal with the problem. Analysis should be as thorough, creative and innovative as possible.
- To assist the problem solvers, questions regarding the problem should revolve around: location, suspect/offenders and victims/complainants.

Response
Based on careful analysis, develop a goal which can be reached using your custom-made response. Solutions can be designed to:

- Eliminate the problem
- Reduce the problem
- Reduce the harm created by the problem
- Better deal with the problem

Assessment

- Evaluate effectiveness.
- Assessment allows the problem solvers to determine what effect the response had on the problem. If the response had little or no effect, more analysis can be done, so that a more appropriate response can be applied. If the response had an impact on reducing or eliminating the problem, celebrate your success!

Sample
Demand Letter
To
Problem Resident

Date

Mr. John Doe
145 Anywhere Ln
Danville, CA 94526

Dear Mr. Doe:

This letter represents six neighbors that live in the neighborhood. We are collectively writing you because we are concerned about the criminal activity occurring at your residence. For the past two months, there have been loud, large parties occurring at your residence every Saturday night. These parties usually begin around 8:00 p.m. and do not end until approximately 2:00 a.m. Sunday morning. The individuals leaving the party are extremely loud, and leave beer bottles and trash up and down the street.

We had hoped these parties would stop, however they have not. Therefore, this letter is a demand letter that you take appropriate action as the property owner and stop these disturbances. If they fail to stop within 15 days of the date of this letter, at least six neighbors will be taking further action by pursuing charges either through the police department, or by filing a civil action through an attorney, or both.

We hope you will take appropriate action and resolve this issue. If you have any questions, or wish to meet with us, you can contact us at 925.555.1111.

Sincerely,

Green Acres Neighbors

Sample
Letter to Police

Date

Officer John Doe
Danville Police Department
510 La Gonda Way
Danville, CA 94526

Dear Officer Doe:

We wish to call your attention to our concerns regarding suspected criminal activity at 123 Main Street. Neighbors believe that the occupants of 123 Main St are engaged in dealing drugs.

Numerous individuals have been seen entering the residence, only to stay for a brief period of time, usually no more than five minutes, and then leave. They arrive and leave in vehicles. This activity goes on throughout the day and evening hours, usually ending around midnight. We have also found drug needles in front of the house. This activity has been occurring for approximately two months.

Approximately one month ago, concerned neighbors sent a letter to the owner of the house, advising him of the suspected criminal activity and demanding that he contact the occupants, who rent the house. To date, we have not heard from the owner. Attached, is a copy of the letter sent.

In addition, neighbors have also kept a log of the suspicious activity, listing dates, times, and descriptions of persons involved. Attached is a copy of the log.

We hope this information will assist you and other patrol officers in helping us to address the problem. Please contact me at 925. 555.1111 to further discuss this situation.

Sincerely,

Name, Title or Group Name
Address
City, State Zip

Sample

Community Meeting Notice

Green Acres Homeowners Association Club House
4562 Sweet Meadow Drive
Thursday, September 14, 2012
7:00 p.m.

7:00 p.m. Welcome and introductions

7:15 p.m. Announcements and neighborhood news update

7:30 p.m. Lighting and crime prevention at the neighborhood park

Speakers:

- Denise Garland, Resident
- Officer Sean Tracy, River City Police Department
- Vicki Wright, City Public Works Department

8:00 p.m. Question and answers

8:30 p.m. Review tasks/make assignments for next steps

8:50 p.m. Set next meeting date, time & location

9:00 p.m. Adjourn meeting

Coffee and Desserts will be served 15 minutes before the meeting begins.

Sample
Suspicious Activity Log

Address of Property _____

Date / Time of Observation:

Description of Persons:

Repeat Visitor- Yes / No:

Description of Activity:

Description of Vehicle:

Reported to Police: Yes / No

Impact of the incident on you and your family:
* (This is for potential legal action. I.E. - Scared to let kids play outside because of the frequent fighting that occurs, or people from problem house are drunk and hostile towards me and other neighbors).

Sample

Vehicle Description Form

License Plate Number: _____ State: _____

Make: _____ Model: _____ Year: _____

Body Style (2-Door) convertible, etc.): _____

Color: _____

Identifying wheels, dents, scratches, bumper stickers, decals, etc.:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Sample
Neighborhood Telephone/Email Tree

Neighborhood Coordinator _____ Phone _____

Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Name	Address	Phone/Email
Block Captain:		
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
Block Captain:		
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
Block Captain:		
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		

Sample
Suspect Description Form

Sex: Race: Age: Height: Weight:

Hair Color: Length: Style: Sideburns:

Eye Glasses: Style:

Face Complexion: Mustache: Beard:

Tattoos:

Scars/Marks:

Speech/Accent:

Distinguishable Gait/Limp:

Bag/Backpack, etc.:

Clothing: Cap/Hat:

Coat/Jacket:

Shirt or Blouse:

Pants:

Skirt:

Dress:

Shoes:

Gloves:

Jewelry:

Purse:

Weapon: Handgun/Knife, etc.:

Danville Police Resource Guide

Police Emergency -911

Police Dispatch – Non-emergency – 925.820.2144

Police Department – Customer Service Desk – 925.314.3700

Crime Prevention Office – 925.314.3707

Parking Enforcement – 925.314.3769

Traffic Complaints – 925.314.3768

Watch Sergeant – 925.314.3720

Code Enforcement – 925.314.3335

Investigations Sergeant – 925.314.3703

Volunteer Coordinator – 925.314.3725

Police Administrative Lieutenant – 925.314.3702

Chief of Police – 925.314.3701

- About us
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About Nextdoor

We're a team of 44 people who are passionate about building stronger and safer neighborhoods. We're based in San Francisco, California.

- What is Nextdoor
- Who is Nextdoor
- Our manifesto
- Privacy
- Safety
- Guidelines

What is Nextdoor

Nextdoor is the private social network for you, your neighbors and your community. It's the easiest way for you and your neighbors to talk online and make all of your lives better in the real world. And it's free.

Thousands of neighborhoods are already using Nextdoor to build happier, safer places to call home.

People are using Nextdoor to:

- Quickly get the word out about a break-in
- Organize a Neighborhood Watch Group
- Track down a trustworthy babysitter
- Find out who does the best paint job in town
- Ask for help keeping an eye out for a lost dog
- Find a new home for an outgrown bike
- Finally call that nice man down the street by his first name

Nextdoor's mission is to bring back a sense of community to the neighborhood, one of the most important communities in each of our lives.

Who is Nextdoor

We created this company because we believe that the neighborhood is one of the most important and useful communities in a person's life. We hope that neighbors everywhere will use the Nextdoor platform to build stronger and safer neighborhoods around the world.

If you are interested in joining our team, please view our current job openings.

Based in San Francisco, California, Nextdoor was founded in 2010 and is funded by Benchmark Capital, Greylock Partners and Shasta Ventures.

Our manifesto

- **We are for neighbors**
- For neighborhood barbecues. For multi-family garage sales. For trick-or-treating
- We're for slowing down, children at play.
- We're for sharing a common hedge and an awesome babysitter.
- We're for neighborhood watch. Emergency response. And for just keeping an eye out for a lost cat.
- We believe waving hello to the new neighbor says, “Welcome” better than any doormat.
- We believe technology is a powerful tool for making neighborhoods stronger, safer places to call home.
- We're all about online chats that lead to more clothesline chats.
- We believe fences are sometimes necessary, but online privacy is always necessary.
- We believe strong neighborhoods not only improve our property value, they improve each one of our lives.
- We believe that amazing things can happen by just talking with the people next door.
- **We are Nextdoor. We are simply you and your neighbors, together.**

Privacy

Fences are sometimes necessary. But online privacy is **always** necessary. Nextdoor makes it safe to share online the kinds of things you'd be okay sharing with your neighbors in person.

Here's how:

- Every neighbor has to verify their address.
- Every neighbor signs in with their real name. Just like in person.
- Your website is protected by password and encrypted by HTTPS.
- We never share your info with advertisers.

To learn more about privacy, visit Frequently Asked Questions about privacy, or read our complete Privacy Policy.

Safety

Nextdoor makes it safe to share online the kind of things you'd be okay sharing with your neighbors in person.

Here's how:

- Every neighbor must verify their address.
- Each neighbor signs in with their real name. Just like in person.
- You choose where your information is shared.
- Your website is securely encrypted using the HTTPS Internet protocol.
- Information shared will never show up in Google or other search engines.
- Nextdoor never shares your personal information with third-party advertisers.

To learn more about verification, visit Frequently Asked Questions about verification.

To learn more about safety, visit Frequently Asked Questions about safety.

If you have a personal safety concern, report it here.

To learn more about being a member, see our Member Agreement and Privacy Policy.

Neighborhood Guidelines

We created Nextdoor because we believe that a neighborhood is one of the most important and useful communities in a person's life.

We believe in the traditional notion of neighbors as people who help and look out for each other. We hope that Nextdoor members embrace the concept of being neighborly to each other.

To us, being neighborly includes:

Respecting your neighbors

- Be honest, authentic, and straightforward in all actions
- Show tolerance to each other, even if you don't share similar opinions
- Don't share posts from the website without the author's permission

Sharing useful information

- Answer your fellow neighbors' questions
- Report crime and emergency alerts
- Post weather and traffic bulletins
- Discuss community-wide issues
- Publicize neighborhood events

Supporting your neighborhood

- Recommend great local businesses and service providers (without spamming)
- Sell, share, or donate products that you no longer need
- Strengthen the community by inviting your neighbors to Nextdoor

If you have any questions or comments, contact us anytime.

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